

Development of National Disaster Information System

*64. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to develop a National Disaster Information System (NDIS), which will alert all citizens before any natural disaster and terrorist attack through their mobile phones, landlines and wireless;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how long it will take to be functional; and

(d) how far it will be useful in protecting us in the event of any disaster?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Technologies are being developed which will allow us in the future to alert citizens before the natural disaster. The nature of the technology will differ depending upon the nature of the disaster. Pilot projects are being undertaken to develop such technologies and to acquire capabilities for alerting our citizens. Thus far, we do not have the necessary technology in place.

In case of Natural Disasters which are results of Cyclones, Typhoons, Storm surges, Tsunami, etc. it is possible to give advance information. By monitoring such natural events it is technologically possible to alert our citizens in advance because of the time lead involved in such natural events reaching and impacting our citizens. But natural disasters such as earthquakes, cloud burst, etc. with the technology available thus far, are difficult to predict. Science is in the process of better understanding such phenomenon with the hope of developing technologies for providing possible alerts in future.

Technology Development Board (TDB), Department of Science and Technology, has provided financial assistance to a company M/s Geneva Software Technologies Limited, Bangalore for a pilot project for development of Natural Disaster Information System (NDIS) under which alert messages generated in English language at IMD were converted automatically in regional languages and sent under text / voice mode to the identified telephone/mobile numbers, and also in voice mode through wireless, in the selected areas of Nagapattinam coastal area and at Chennai city.

As far as terrorist attacks are concerned, it is difficult to alert the citizens based on the available technologies. However, it is possible to envisage the development of appropriate technologies in the future depending upon the nature of terrorist attacks.

(c) and (d) Pilot project has been technically developed and successfully demonstrated. However, in order to make it functional, we require resources and network for the same. It is difficult to say when such a system will be fully functional.

It may be mentioned that the technology developed is a generic technology and it has got multiple applications in information system for alerting and also giving messages of social relevance. Such technology can also be used for disseminating/sending audio messages to land line phones and also disseminating information through the wireless public address systems. Such information can be disseminated in case of rains, floods, landslides, railway accidents, traffic jams, health related messages, fires, etc.

In order to transmit the messages pertaining to natural disasters etc. there is need to develop/provide public private partnership for effective communication. The message can also be transmitted as scrolling message on T.V. networks.

The technology has been demonstrated to the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Disaster Management Authority for further appropriate action.

Speedy disposal of criminal cases

*65. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studied the recent observations of the Supreme Court of India that around 1.77 crore criminal cases are pending in various courts across the country and that "Government must take necessary steps immediately to enforce the right to speedy trial of an accused" which is one of the facets of the fundamental right to life and liberty enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and